



February 28, 2011

House Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee  
Lansing, Michigan 48912

Re; HB 4207 – Uncontrolled burning of household waste

Dear Representatives,

The Michigan Environmental Council is an umbrella group of 65 environmental and conservation groups located across the state. We are concerned about public health and the impacts that air pollution have on residents of our state.

We oppose prohibiting the department from moving ahead with rules to limit the uncontrolled burning of household waste. The uncontrolled burning of waste leads to the emission of a variety of toxic chemicals which will be breathed by neighboring residents. These chemicals include hydrogen cyanide, benzene, lead, mercury, and dioxin, a number of which can cause cancer.

The fine particulate matter in the smoke itself is also potentially harmful to people with respiratory issues and can result in both acute and chronic health effects, such as asthma. Particle pollution can lodge deep in the lungs and cause respiratory problems, cardiac arrhythmia (heartbeat irregularities), and heart attacks. Particle pollution can also impact the young, the elderly, and people with existing conditions such as emphysema, bronchitis, and asthma.

Over 60% of Michigan residents live in counties which currently exceed the allowed levels of particulate matter in the air. These emissions come from a variety of sources from industrial facilities to EPA certified wood-burning stoves. Because we are not in compliance with ambient air quality standards, Michigan residents and businesses will be forced to implement programs to reduce those emissions. Eliminating unnecessary and uncontrolled sources of particulate matter will reduce costs for others as we move to come into compliance with federal rules on clean air.

Lastly, uncontrolled burning of household garbage can cause wild fires and property damage far beyond the boundaries of a person's backyard.

We request your opposition to HB 4207.

Sincerely,  
James Clift, Policy Director

Michigan Environmental Council, 119 Pere Marquette, Ste 2A, Lansing, MI 48912